



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Religious Hate Crime

Anas Sarwar (Labour) [S6W-11942] To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the recommendations of the report of the public inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland, what steps it is taking to consider hate crimes experienced by Sikhs, Hindus and other South Asians.

Christina McKelvie: The Scottish Government unequivocally condemns any form of hatred or prejudice, it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The Cross-Party Report on Tackling Islamophobia shines a light on the impact of anti-Muslim hatred in Scotland and we are considering its findings as we develop a new hate crime strategy for Scotland.

I established the Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group to provide collective cross-sectoral strategic leadership in the development of a new strategy. It will set out our priorities for tackling hatred and prejudice in Scotland and support implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021. Members of the group include justice and public sector agencies, as well as Age Scotland, Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS), Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations (CEMVO), Equality and Human Rights Commission (Observer), Equality Network, Glasgow Disability Alliance, Interfaith Scotland, RespectMe, Scottish Human Rights Commission (Observer) and YouthLink Scotland.

Importantly, the strategy will be informed by communities with lived experience of hate crime – including religious and racially motivated hate crime – and members of our Strategic Partnership Group are actively engaging with communities, to understand their experiences.

We are absolutely committed to tackling all forms of hate crime, including those experienced by Sikhs, Hindus and other South Asians.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11942>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://13nf55.n3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Report-AWK.pdf>

Religious Hate Crime

Anas Sarwar (Labour) [S6W-11943] To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S6W-03291 by Shona Robison on 8 October 2021, what steps it has taken to address the reported shortfall in data about Islamophobic hate crimes and hate crimes against non-Muslim groups such as Sikhs and Hindus in Scotland.

Christina McKelvie: We are committed to tackling hatred and prejudice in all its forms and recognise the value of having robust data and evidence on hate crime in Scotland. We want to see disaggregated data published on a regular and sustainable basis – including data about hate crimes against Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus.

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 makes provision requiring disaggregated information about police recorded hate crime and convictions data to be published annually. We are working with justice partners to ensure these provisions can be implemented effectively.

In the meantime, a further Scottish Government study into the characteristics of hate crimes recorded by police in 2020-21 will be published later this winter. This report will include the nature of hate crimes recorded by the police, including characteristics of both victims and perpetrators.

We encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed a hate crime to report it to Police Scotland by dialling 101 in non-emergencies, or 999 in emergencies.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11943>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-03291>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answer

Iran

Crispin Blunt (Conservative): ... Will my hon. Friend also comment on our policy towards Israel and the composition of its new Government? That must give very grave cause for concern, as must the fact that Israel has now been found guilty by the world's three most distinguished human rights organisations of running an apartheid policy, and of being in gross violation of the fourth Geneva convention.

David Rutley: I reassure my hon. Friend that human rights are at the forefront of our conversations, dialogue and diplomatic activity, whether with Iran, Egypt—we have already talked about the case of Mr Fattah—or Israel. It is at the forefront of our work, particularly in the middle east.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-11-16/debates/DAA5D965-85ED-4DE5-8983-E237DD564B4D/Iran#contribution-D2EDA88A-EE4D-48B6-BF12-CB53B2CBAB83>

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Stephen Timms (Labour) [84790] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2022 to

Question 70949 on Israel: Palestinians, what response his Department has received to its representations on Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza and the need for investigations.

David Rutley: We regularly raise the issue of the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities. We encourage them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We will continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-11/84790>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-25/70949>

Israel: Palestinians

Caroline Lucas (Green) [77367] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2022 to Question 69579 on Israel: Palestinians, what response he received from his Israeli counterpart to his objections to reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention.

David Rutley: We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in Israel. We have made clear our objections about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention and continue to call on the Israeli authorities to respect their obligations under international law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-02/77367>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-24/69579>

Palestinians: Health Services

Patrick Grady (Independent) [82353] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on access for Palestinians to (a) cancer and (b) other medical treatment outside of the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

David Rutley: The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has a duty of ensuring and maintaining public health to the fullest extent of the means available to it. The wounded and ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-08/82353>

Palestinians: Health Services

Patrick Grady (Independent) [82354] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of the Israeli government's handling of applications for permits for (a) patients, (b) companions and (c) health workers travelling in and out of the Palestinian Occupied Territories for medical treatment.

David Rutley: We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to end the restrictions on movement and access of essential healthcare workers, and Palestinians seeking medical services. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of regularised access to healthcare with the Israeli authorities. The

wounded and ill in Gaza and the West Bank should be able to access the urgent medical care they need.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-08/82354>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Decision No.1/2022 of Joint Committee established by UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement on 9 November 2022 for modification of Protocol 4 to the Agreement [TS No.5/2022]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1117415/TS_5.2022_Decision_No1_Israel_TPA.pdf

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel: UN experts condemn attacks against human rights defender Issa Amro and Palestinian civil society

Israel must immediately lift the “closed military zone” it has imposed on the house of prominent Palestinian human rights defender Issa Amro, say UN experts*.

Israeli occupation forces established a “closed military zone” around Amro’s house on 31 October, a day after Amro sought to file a police complaint against Israeli settler violence. The military order subsequently has been verbally renewed daily.

Amro, who is an internationally respected human rights defender and a civil society leader in youth education initiatives, regularly receives death threats from settlers and Israeli Forces. UN experts have previously intervened and [called for](#) his protection.

“The case of Issa Amro is emblematic of the sophisticated array of obstacles faced by Palestinian human rights defenders who engage in non-violent activities,” said the experts. “Israel’s use of military force to deter, silence or persecute non-violent and peaceful organisations and individuals is symptomatic of an apartheid regime, brittle and intolerant to any form of criticism.”

Amro’s house in Tel Rumeida, Hebron, in the occupied West Bank, also serves as a community centre of the Palestinian civil society organisation Youth Against Settlements, which seeks to end settlement expansion through peaceful civil resistance. The experts said the house closure raises serious concerns about freedom of association and assembly in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Amro was assaulted with sticks and rocks throughout October as he led an initiative to assist Palestinian families with the olive harvest. Amro was turned away by the local police when he attempted to file a complaint on 30 October.

“Israel is using counter-terrorism legislation and military orders to halt, restrict and criminalise legitimate human rights and humanitarian work, and as a means of controlling and repressing the Palestinian population,” the experts said. “Israel’s targeting of Issa Amro and closure of the Youth Against Settlements community centre amount to yet another unilateral Israeli attack on civic space across occupied Palestine.” ...

In January 2021, Amro faced 18 charges in Israeli Military Court in Ofer relating to his human rights work. Although 12 charges were dropped during his trial, in March 2021 Amro was sentenced to a three-month suspended prison sentence, with two years’ probation. His appeal is still pending. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/israel-un-experts-condemn-attacks-against-human-rights-defender-issa-amro>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

**** Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

Stage 2 Consideration of Amendments, Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/EHRCJ-15-11-2022?meeting=13992&iob=126771>

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